

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE AND INDONESIAN ELECTIONS

1. DURING VISIT TO JAKARTA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE CALLED ON SEC-GEN FOR INFORMATION, MAJOR GENERAL SUTIKNO, TO DISCUSS ACCESS OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS IN INDONESIA. SUTIKNO IS SENIOR OFFICIAL WITH WHOM AMERICAN JOURNALISTS DEAL, AND HIS ATTITUDES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PRESS PROBLEMS. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF CONVERSATION.

2. HOLBROOKE OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY EXPRESSING HOPE THAT INDONESIA COULD BE AS "OPEN" AS POSSIBLE WITH JOURNALISTS FROM UNITED STATES. HE EXPLAINED THAT, PARTICULARLY SINCE WATERGATE, AMERICAN JOURNALISTS DO NOT LIKE ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF "COVER UP." IF THEY FACE RESTRICTIONS ON ANYTHING, THESE TEND TO GET ATTENTION AND OVERSHADOW POSITIVE ELEMENTS. HE MENTIONED THE INDONESIAN AGREEMENT TO PERMIT AMERICAN CONGRESSMEN TO VISIT TIMOR AS WISE AND SUGGESTED THE SAME POLICY MIGHT APPLY TO JOURNALISTS. INDONESIA IS A GREAT COUNTRY AND "YOU HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE."

3. WITH REGARDS THE SUSPENSION OF NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE IN INDONEISA, HOLBROOKE STATED THAT HE KNEW ARTICLE IN QUESTION WAS OFFENSIVE TO INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT BUT HE THOUGHT IN  
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LONG RUN IT WOULD BE WORSE IF INDONESIA CONTINUED TO BAN DISTRIBUTION OF PERIODICAL IN COUNTRY. REASON FOR THIS, HE SAID, WAS THAT OTHER AMERICAN JOURNALISTS WOULD GAIN IMPRESSION THERE WAS NO FREEDOM OF PRESS IN INDONESIA SINCE NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE WAS NOT PERMITTED ENTER COUNTRY. HE CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE WAS NOT HERE TO NEGOTIATE ISSUE BUT TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER SUSPENSION OF NEWSWEEK.

4. AMBASSADOR NEWSOM ASKED SECRETARY GENERAL SUTIKNO IF HE COULD EXPLAIN REGULATIONS CONCERNING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS COVERING FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN INDONESIA. GENERAL SUTIKNO REFERRED MATTER TO MR. SUKARNO WHO WAS ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THIS ACTIVITY AND HAD RECENTLY BRIEFED FOREIGN PRESS ON SUCH REGULATIONS.

MR. SUKARNO THEN EXPLAINED FOREIGN JOURNALISTS COULD FREELY COVER ALL PHASES OF ELECTION TO THE SECOND ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL. WHEN SECRETARY HOLBROOKE ASKED IF THEY COULD COVER ACTIVITIES AT VILLAGE LEVEL, IT WAS EXPLAINED THIS COULD NOT BE DONE FOR VARIOUS REASONS FIRST OF ALL, ACCORDING TO GENERAL SUTIKNO, IT WAS THOUGHT THAT SINCE THERE WERE 280 SITES AT THE SECOND LEVEL WHICH COULD BE COVERED, FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE ENOUGH SCOPE FOR ANY ARTICLES THEY WISHED TO WRITE.

6. HOLBROOKE THEN SAID A FOREIGN JOURNALIST MIGHT ONLY BE ABLE TO COVER ONE SITE BUT THAT WAS NOT HIS CONCERN. HE SAID THAT WHILE INDONESIA WOULD BE GIVING FOREIGN JOURNALISTS A 98PCT FREE FIELD OF COVERAGE, IT WOULD BE THE NEGATIVE 2PCT OF PROHIBITING THEM FROM VILLAGE COVERAGE THAT WOULD BE FOCUS OF THEIR STORIES, AS SUCH, INDONESIA WOULD RECEIVE BAD PRESS FROM AMERICAN JOURNALISTS. HOLBROOKE SAID THAT IF HE WERE A REPORTER HE WOULD WRITE CRITICALLY BECAUSE OF SUCH A RESTRICTION.

7. WHEN FURTHER PRESSED AS TO WHY GOI HAD IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS COVERING ELECTIONS, IT WAS ALSO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATED THERE WAS CONCERN OVER JOURNALISTS FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES VISITING AND ASKING QUESTIONS IN VILLAGES. SECRETARY HOLBROOKE TOOK IMMEDIATE EXCEPTION TO IDEA THAT SOVIET JOURNALISTS WOULD BE EQUATED WITH THOSE FROM WEST. HOLBROOKE POINTED OUT THAT IN U.S. WE DO HAVE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AFFECTING NEWSPAPERMEN FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AND SAID HE WOULD JUST LEAVE THAT AS A THOUGHT. MR. GUNARDIRJA THEN EXPLAINED THAT SINCE INDONESIA FOLLOWED A POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT, IT WOULD NOT RESTRICT JOURNALISTS FROM COMMUNIST NATIONS ONLY BUT HAD TO APPLY A BLANKET RULING.

8. AGAIN SECRETARY HOLBROOKE ASKED WHY SUCH A RESTRICTIVE LAW HAD BEEN IMPOSED UPON FOREIGN JOURNALISTS BY GOI. MR. GUNARDIRJA AND MR. SUKARNO SAID THAT IN APPLYING THIS REGULATION GOI HAD DEFINITELY CONSIDERED ALL ASPECTS - NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE - OF SITUATION AND HAD DECIDED TO PUT IT INTO EFFECT. THE RULES WERE NOT LIKELY TO BE CHANGED. IT WAS STATED THAT THERE WERE MANY REASONS FOR SUCH ACTION, ONE OF THEM BEING SECURITY. IT WAS ALSO EXPLAINED THAT

THIS WAS ONLY THIRD ELECTION IN INDONESIA AND PEOPLE WERE STILL BEING TRAINED IN CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS. ALSO, IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE ONLY THREE POLITICAL PARTIES PERMITTED TO CAMPAIGN IN ELECTION PERIOD.

9. INDONESIAN REPRESENTATIVES ALSO REALIZED THAT, IN PRACTICE, SOME JOURNALISTS WILL BE COVERING VILLAGE ACTIVITIES. THIS WAS IN REPLY TO QUESTION FROM HOLBROOKE ASKING WHAT WOULD PREVENT THEM FROM STOPPING AT A VILLAGE ON ELECTION DAY IF THEY WERE TRAVELLING FROM ONE CITY TO ANOTHER. WHEN THE INDONESIAN PARTICIPANTS AGREED THIS WOULD HAPPEN, HOLBROOKE AGAIN STATED THAT IN SUCH A CASE RESTRICTIVE LAWS ON FOREIGN JOURNALIST ACTIVITIES WERE SILLY.

10. HOLBROOKE THEN SAID THAT CERTAINLY U.S. DID NOT WISH TO ENTER INTO OTHER NATION'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. HOWEVER, HE DID WANT TO POINT OUT, AS RESULT OF DETENTION OF TWO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JOURNALISTS IN SINGAPORE, DAMAGING ARTICLE TO THAT COUNTRY APPEARED IN NEW YORK TIMES. SECRETARY-GENERAL SUTIKNO INTERVENED TO SAY THAT THE TWO JOURNALISTS IN SINGAPORE HAD BEEN SUSPECTED COMMUNISTS AND THAT IN A SIMILAR SITUATION INDONESIA WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING.

11. AMBASSADOR NEWSOM CONCLUDED BY TELLING GENERAL SUTIKNO THAT HE REALIZED CONCERN OF INDONESIA IN RECEIVING A BAD PRESS FROM AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, AND HE HOPED THAT WE COULD ASSIST GOI IN ANALYSING WHY SUCH WAS OCCURING AND IN TAKING CURATIVE STEPS TO REMEDY SITUATION.  
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